



**2008 Clinton Global Initiative Annual Meeting
Education Working Session: Global Expansion of Programs
that Increase Quality Education: Part 1
Clinton Global Initiative
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[START RECORDING]

FEMALE SPEAKER: Good afternoon. It's my pleasure to welcome you to this first working session and to give you a preview of the structure of this session and your critical role in that. Many of you know from prior experiences and from things that you've heard about the Clinton Global Initiative that a hallmark of these meetings is the interactive component. That is what's going to happen in the next few minutes.

The session is divided into about four different sections. In the first, you're going to hear some panelists and they'll be introduced to you very shortly. While those panelists are speaking, you can use those notepads that are on your table and pass any questions that you would like for the panelists to your facilitator.

At each table, there's a facilitator who's sitting behind a laptop. That's how you can recognize the facilitator. So you can very quietly pass those questions to your facilitator and he or she will enter those questions into the laptop real time. They will go to the theme team who are in the back of the room. Wave your hands, theme team.

So real time, they will be receiving your questions. They're going to very quickly compile them so that by the time the panelists finish, we'll be able to give the moderator and your working group chair your questions and they will respond to those questions in a following section of the session.

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Once the panelists have finished, you will begin to have some conversation about a question that your working group chair will share with you and which is already entered in the laptop that's on the table. And this is where it's really important for you to bring your ideas, to bring particularly your innovative, your creative approaches to some of the issues that you're going to hear presented on this stage this evening.

Those comments are going to be captured and those ideas are going to be captured by your facilitator as you are having your discussion in our groupware system. And they're going to be sent again to the theme team who will be paying attention to what comes out across all of the tables. They will pull together themes from your discussions and things that we call gems.

Gems are those unique sort of provocative ideas that we think are very interesting that may not reflect full themes across the table. Those are going to be handed to Gene Sperling and to the moderator and they will have an opportunity then to respond to the questions that came from you and to the themes and gems that come from you.

At the table, what we ask you to do is to have one conversation, to focus, to use that back-and-forth and really build on the synergies that are present at the table and to really enjoy your discussion.

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Once the panelists have a chance to respond to the themes and to the gems and to your questions, then you will hear from the commitments. You'll get a chance to hear the commitments that are being made here in the education session and that very quickly and simply is the interactive component of our meeting. Have an enjoyable meeting. [Applause]

MALE SPEAKER: Good afternoon. Please welcome [laughter] Gene Sperling. [Applause]

GENE SPERLING: I ask do I have to wait from the voice of God or the Wizard of Oz, or can I just come up? Thank you. This panel, which is going to be on Expanding Quality, I just want to start with one comment about this topic because there's open ideas that you can have, but there is one idea you can't have.

You can't have the idea that the way to improve quality is to keep less kids out of school, that we need to move slower on getting all kids in school as a way to have quality. That is only a comment people would make about other kids. Michelle Rhee is going to speak here.

Kevin Johnson is going to be the new Mayor of Sacramento [Applause] [Laughter] and runs an amazing school if you didn't watch *Oprah* when it was featured. They are never going to come back to their constituents and say I have a fantastic idea how to increase quality for 60 percent of our kids. We'll just have no school for 40 percent of the kids.

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So our goal is to look about how you expand quality and access at the same time. And as we looked at this, I was fortunate enough to be on the advisory board for the Hewlett-Gates Foundation effort, which they call the Quality Education in Developing Countries Program.

And that really was nice for me for Clinton Global Initiative because in doing that we were looking around at projects all over the world, and there were two people who you'll see are recipients of that and I think really on the threshold of asking the question we all have to ask, which is how do we go beyond just getting butts in chairs, which is important, but it's not enough—necessary, but not sufficient. Butts in chairs, but children learning and growing intellectually in their aspirations, that's what this panel is about.

It made sense, therefore, to have our moderator be the Senior Fellow of the Hewlett Foundation's Global Development Program, but most importantly, Dr. Lynn Murphy has been very much the driving force behind the Hewlett-Gates Education Quality Agenda, and so I'm going to introduce Lynn Murphy, our moderator, and I am going to turn it over to her, and we're going to have a discussion, and then as you heard, we'll have a bit more interactive discussion at your tables after that.

So with that, may I introduce our moderator, Lynn Murphy. [Applause]

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MALE SPEAKER: Thank you very much, please welcome

Rukmini Banerji, Director of Pratham and ASER Centre.

[Applause] Please welcome Maria Keita Diarra, Founder of the Institut pour l'Education Populaire. [Applause] Please welcome Michelle Rhee, Chancellor of the District of Columbia Public Schools. [Applause] Take it away, Ms. Murphy.

LYNN MURPHY: Good afternoon and thank you all for being here. We have a fantastic set of panelists here to discuss the issue of global expansion programs to increase the quality of education. As Gene said, I am a little obsessed with this topic in my role at the Hewlett Foundation and I just want to put out a few facts just to set the stage before I introduce our panelists and we jump into the questions.

We hear a lot of figures and numbers thrown around, but I just want to remind us that we're talking about 72 million children in primary school are out of school, 226 million children in the world do not have access to secondary school.

But nevertheless, there have been tremendous strides in improving access to education. In the past decade, we've seen 30 million more children in South Asia walk through the school doors. We've seen more than 20 million in Africa walk through the school doors perhaps for the very first time.

But too few of them are getting quality. It's starting to be called the crisis of education and often it's the silent crisis of education. They're walking through the door; they're

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not staying for very long. The highest dropout rates in many countries in Africa is before third grade. Before third grade, children are dropping out.

So why is that? Well, many of us have heard about the shortage of books, the shortage of classrooms, overcrowded classrooms having more than 100 children in one class, a teacher who may not be present all the time. There are a myriad of reasons. More than half of children in the sixth grades in many African countries do not have a single textbook.

So how can children be learning if they don't have materials? How can children be learning if the teachers haven't been trained properly? There are a myriad issues. There are complex issues. There is emerging evidence to say that many countries in Africa, 25 percent of children in sixth grade are barely literate, which means 75 percent are still illiterate.

And the panelists here today have, instead of leaning away from this problem, have leaned directly into the problem of how do you improve the quality of education and how do you do it at scale, so we can learn about this and actually try to reform what's going on in these countries where it's been an enormous opportunity for children to walk through the school doors for the first time? We want to keep them there. We want to make sure that they learn enough so they can be productive members of their society.

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So with that, I am going to introduce our panelists who are incredibly distinguished. I've had the privilege of working with Rukmini and Maria over the last two years so I'm going to start with Rukmini. Dr. Rukmini Banerji is a member of the National Leadership Team of Pratham, a large-scale citizen's initiative to universalize elementary education in India.

Currently, Pratham's flagship program Read India has a presence in over 300 rural districts and has reached more than 20 million children. Initially trained as an economist, Dr. Banerji was a Rhodes scholar at Oxford and has completed her Ph.D at the University of Chicago. She was responsible for Pratham's work in Northern India and since 2005, she's been working on an incredible innovation, which I think she'll say more about called the Annual Status of Education Report or ASER, which means "impact" in Hindi.

ASER is the largest annual study ever done by Indian citizens to monitor the status of elementary education in the country and has been widely recognized for its efforts, its innovative ways of mobilizing citizens to look at what's happening with the provision of basic services.

Our next panelist is Maria Keita. Maria has over 20 years of experience in development and education in Malawi. She is the Founder of the Institute for Popular Education based in Kati. She founded this organization in 1993 after extensive

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work with the women's organization where she was the secretary general of the Malawi Women's Network, and she founded it because she really wanted to look for alternative models for how to empower children and how to empower communities in education.

She's led a youth leadership program that has reached 150 rural communities throughout Malawi. She holds a master's degree in International Education from the University of Massachusetts and she's also an Ashoka fellow.

Our last panelist, Michelle Rhee, and I apologize I was citing facts about all the developing world and she has an equally [Laughter] daunting task. She is the Chancellor of the D.C. public schools, a district with more than 50,000 students and 144 schools.

She founded the New Teacher Project in 1997 and is a nationally recognized leader in understanding and developing innovative solutions to the challenges of new teacher training. As the Chief Executive Officer there, she worked with school districts, state governments, nonprofits and unions to transform the way that schools and other organizations recruit, select and train new teachers.

This work has had influence in Atlanta, Baltimore, Chicago, Miami, New York, Oakland, Philadelphia, I think we can say across the nation, and they have reached 23,000 new highly quality teachers were placed in these schools across the

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nation. We look forward to hearing more about the work that you've been doing.

So to begin with all of this, I'm going to first start with Rikmani at Pratham, and you heard me mention that you've been doing this program in Read India that sets out by 2010 to reach every child in India and make sure that they have basic levels of literacy and math, an incredibly ambitious goal, an incredibly ambitious target.

You've reached more than half of India. You've been tracking progress through what I mentioned in this Status Education Report. You've opened your doors to allow the Poverty Action Lab to come in and do impact evaluations to look at the effectiveness of your model, but can you tell us what does it look like to actually get 20 million children reading?

RUKMINI BANERJI: Lynn actually gave me the question earlier. And she gave me 15 minutes to think about how I should answer it [laughter] and I'm still wondering how to do it. I think some very basic facts. In India we have an enrollment rate in primary school of about well over 90 percent, which is very historic for a country of our size.

And a large part of the population both whether it's policy makers or parents feel that we've really achieved a major goal by actually having schools within 1-kilometer habitations off almost every village and having enrollments high.

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But in the work that we've been doing at Pratham over the last 10 years or so, we increasingly felt that the focus now needs to shift, access is very important, as I think Gene mentioned, but now that we've come across the threshold of achieving a very high level of access for kids, we need to look at what is happening to them in school.

And the survey that Lynn mentioned, we do a very simple reading assessment across the country. We facilitate it. It is done locally in every district in the country, looks at whether children can read very simple things, simple sentences in regional languages which would be the equivalent of I go to school, my brother goes to school, we like going to school, simple sentences like this and we found that 50 percent of our children who are in school, even up to fifth grade cannot read simple things like this.

So the Read India program actually came out of that realization that for 200 million children in the country, 50 percent cannot read simple things and they're in school and if we don't do something about it very quickly, we are going to lose many generations of children who'll not be able to achieve, forget about their potential, they'll not be able to achieve even minimum that should come with going to school.

So the Read India campaign is essentially what we all do whether you live in D.C. or you live in a village in India,

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you want your kids to go to school so you try to send them to the best school possible and you also help kids at home.

So within the campaign, we work with school systems. We work with teachers, but we also mobilize large numbers of village volunteers who are educated. They may not be college educated. They may not even be high-school educated, but who are well above a primary school level to help kids who haven't learned to read or do basic math work with kids in the village.

So to just give you a quick example, this summer we have summer vacations for a month or two in every state in India and in about 350 districts, we have about 600 altogether, there was at least one or two young people in each village working with kids who haven't yet learned how to read.

So the numbers actually at the village level seem manageable. There's about 50 or 100 kids who need help, but in a country of our size if you multiply it by that many villages it comes to the numbers that you're talking about.

LYNN MURPHY: So what are the essential pieces of what it is that you do to actually get the children reading? You're working with volunteers, what's the role of the government, how are you working on materials?

RUKMINI BANERJI: A couple of very simple elements, you have to find the time to pay attention to kids who haven't learned how to read. In our schools often, the way the teaching is done is that there is a curriculum that is

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specified for a particular grade level and the teachers teach to the curriculum ignoring the fact that there is large numbers of children who are well below the level that they need to be at.

So whether you're working within the school or outside, you need to focus on where the kid is at so the simple reading assessment really helps and you need to set aside time so that you can achieve the goals that the assessment kind of indicates that you're going to do.

The second thing you need is you need some adults. They could be teachers. They could be youths. They could be volunteers. You need to have some adults who are going to help the kids to do this.

Third thing is you need reading materials. You need to have very simple, very attractive reading materials that children can have access to. They need to be reasonably priced. They need to be distributed.

And finally, I think you have to be able to measure how far you've come periodically. So I think these are the key elements.

Our belief is that we work with the government wherever the governments are willing, but we work any case. Governments are usually willing, but it takes them a little bit of time to get on board. So in state after state, I think as citizens you

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have to move ahead and usually if it's a good idea, the government comes along.

LYNN MURPHY: Thank you very much. Let's turn to Malawi, a country with far fewer people, but much higher illiteracy rates and so Maria has been working on some pretty harsh conditions. She's been working in communities where more than 90 percent of the communities are illiterate, but she's developed a pretty powerful model for how they get the community involved in and around the school with these communities that are illiterate, get them to develop a plan for improving the school.

She has been working with teachers to get them to adopt a method for teaching reading. They've developed an innovative integrated curriculum and they're doing a lot of this work in mother tongue, and in Malawi there are many languages [Laughter]. I know of at least eight. Maria can tell us just how many there are.

And so Maria, you are in the process of actually scaling a model that you've been working in a number of community schools and now you're actually involved in the process of taking it to scale. If you succeed in showing that you can do mother-tongue instruction for these kids and provide a high quality education, what will it mean for Malawi and what will it mean for the region?

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MARIA KEITA DIARRA: Thank you. We have more than 11 languages in Malawi and even now we have 90 percent of our population not going to school, they are illiterates. And Malawi is the country where going to school doesn't mean that you can read and write. You go to school, but at the end of sixth grade, only 20 percent can read simple sentence.

So when we tried to tackle this problem, we were hoping that sending our kid to school will change a lot because for us education means development, and we have a vision that when we send kids and adults to literacy programs, they will improve life around us. And 10 years later, we find out that they can't read and read and they can't even think critically.

So that's why we try to put together a model that can really mobilize the community leadership around finding an alternative model that can empower parents. We call it intergenerational learning, so what parents learn, they will transfer to their kids, and what kids learn will transfer to the parent, so we all together will think that if we don't achieve it in 2015, education for all, we will achieve it at least in 2050 because the challenge is very big. It is very big.

And for us, when we succeed scaling up our model, which is read first and read and get the skill and the right information, you will be able to really do some application, development application, in your area like water sanitation,

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energy, health issue, but right now, we can't even give some direction to our kids or the adults because they cannot read. They cannot act and they have no leadership to take for their own development.

LYNN MURPHY: And Maria, if you could just speak a little bit about the importance of actually doing the instruction in the language that the children speak. What have you seen how that attracts the children to the school? Do they stay more? What are you seeing in terms of their performance? How is it that the child is working with the teacher when you're doing it in the mother tongue versus in French?

MARIA KEITA DIARRA: I think it's so different and one day we asked the teacher to tell us what is the difference when they teaching in French or they teaching in national language and they say it's like life and death. At least kids can move and smile and ask question and also parents can help because the first time we realized that there is a problem, that was after the training.

When we trained the parents to evaluate, to assess learning because literacy means that you can use what you learn right away to your life. And then we put our literacy program on education. What skill the parents need to help the education to move forward? And the day they were able to assess their kids' learning, everything changed since then

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because they get involved. And this is the only application for participation.

We are a decentralized country, but there is nothing for an illiterate person to participate if you can't go to school and then assess your children reading and writing. That's the only thing they are able to do and that's the only field of application of their learning and the democracy now.

So things change when you get people involved into learning in their language because this is the language they think in and this is the language they can really improve and help themselves communicate, negotiate and be a full citizens.

LYNN MURPHY: One last question for you, which is how has the government and the teachers responded to the model that your putting out there, mother tongue instruction in multiple languages, integrated curriculum and trying to do this in a number of schools across Malawi?

MARIA KEITA DIARRA: Since 2000, our government called all the civil-society organization and said we have a problem and we need to tackle the problem together. So they respond is very positive. And right now, with the small demonstration we had which was 50 school, we got USAID now putting a bit to replicate the model for all the school in Malawi.

Our real challenge is who is going to do it in the qualitative way. Our teachers are not trained and we don't have enough money to get 20,000 school. Right now we are

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15,000 school and they don't have teacher. Most of them don't have teacher. Now we are thinking about raising it to 20,000 school and villages and we don't have enough teacher, but we are here to look for strategy, how we can train teacher in a quick way, in an emergency situation so we don't miss this deal.

LYNN MURPHY: So you made a very good point there that I just want to underscore, which is what I would call demonstration advocacy. You demonstrate a model can work and other funders come in and can help take it to scale, in this case the government and USAID.

Let's move on to a place closer to home. Michelle, you are the Chancellor in Washington, D.C., the nation's capital that has some of the greatest disparities that there are, the richest and the poorest and you're tackling some really huge challenges [Laughter] not unlike some of the challenges that we hear about in other countries. Can you tell us a little bit about how you're getting people on board and what exactly you're trying to accomplish?

MICHELLE RHEE: Sure. It was interesting because before we came in, you were sort of saying, oh, I apologize ahead of time because all of the statistics I'm going to use are about developing countries. And I was struck when I was listening to you about how similar the situation is between what we have in D.C. public schools and what you were talking

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about in these developing nations, which is I think is in many ways the shame of this nation because we have in the capital of the wealthiest nation in the world an educational system that is absolutely failing our students everyday.

So I think it's important to think when you're thinking about the sort of global perspective and you're thinking about how do we ensure that kids are in school? How do we make sure that we have adequate facilities for those children? How do we make sure that we have the books and materials that they need?

That is so far from the end game because we have all those things in Washington, D.C., and yet if you look at the quality of education that the kids are receiving, it's absolutely abysmal. So we have in our city about 50,000 school-age children in our district and we have an achievement gap between our wealthy white students and our poor minority students of 70 percentage points.

Of our eighth graders in our city, only 12 percent of them are proficient in reading and only 8 percent are proficient in math. Of all ninth graders who begin school with us, only 9 percent of them graduate from college within five years.

And the most recent data that I was shown just a few weeks ago, which probably is the most disheartening data that I've seen since I've been on this job is the fact that when you look at the achievement levels of our kindergarteners, we

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actually start out pretty equal in Washington, D.C., to other jurisdictions across this country and the longer the children are in the D.C. public schools, the worse off they are, so that by the time that they're in the third grade, they are so far beyond their counterparts in other cities, that we are actually doing them harm by educating them in our system. That's the situation that we have in Washington, D.C., today.

So you asked what I'm doing about [Laughter] that, we are trying to completely change the understanding and the dynamic that exists in the city about what our responsibility is and how we can solve this problem. Because the bottom line in D.C. as it is, I think in most urban districts across this country is that we are advocating responsibility for the education of these children by saying, Well, they come from poor households, they don't have the proper health care, their parents are not supportive and involved, their diets are not what they should be and for all of these various reasons, violence in the community, et cetera, that's why these kids aren't achieving.

And there is an absolute refusal to be accountable and to be held accountable for what we spend. In the District of Columbia, we spend almost more money per child than almost any other jurisdiction in this country and the outcomes are at the absolute bottom. And nobody at any point says we have to hold

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ourselves accountable for making sure that these children are educated.

So what we are trying to do in D.C. right now is try to flip the dynamic, and we're starting at the school level with the educators and the teachers. And you were talking about the role of teachers, what we're trying to do is change the culture to make teachers understand that their job is not just to stand up and teach the curriculum, but that they are not actually doing their job unless the children are learning and that we can measure that progress.

And it's absolutely fascinating to see what the reaction to that has been because we have put on the table in D.C. a proposal that would more than double the salaries of teachers, but the increase is going to be based on whether or not the teachers are effective in attaining the gains in student achievement.

So we are moving towards a system where teachers could essentially make \$131,000 if they can show that they are able to move their kids' academic achievement levels. And our union is potentially on the verge of not approving this contract to double the salaries simply because they absolutely refuse to take accountability for doing their jobs. So that's the dynamic that we're looking to change right now [Laughter].

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LYNN MURPHY: So that's the big thing that you're doing and those are the people that you're trying [Laughter] at the moment—

MICHELLE RHEE: Yes.

LYNN MURPHY: —to get on board. Since we are talking about teachers, I just wanted to come back to the other panelists to ask a little bit more and push on this. There was something I heard that was very similar in terms of how do you change teacher practice to actually show measurable improvements in student learning?

And I just want to come back to you, Rukmini, because I've seen you at work a little bit with the teachers. What are some of the successes that you've seen in terms of changing teacher practice, teacher pedagogy and how has that translated into the changes in student learning?

RUKMINI BANERJI: In India, and I think it's probably quite similar in Malawi as well, we have a lot of first-generation teachers. These are people who have become teachers. They are themselves perhaps the first generation from their own families to have a high-school education and even sort of the whole role and identity of teachers is a new one, add to that the fact that much of the teacher training in countries like ours happens very top-down and very traditionally.

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There will be a teacher trainer who will speak and everybody will sit like we are doing right now, hopefully, we'll change this in a bit [laughter], that one person will speak, others will listen quietly and then this is the expert and these are the students and then that's it. There's no questioning.

And that's exactly replicated in the classroom. Because there is in addition to all of the other factors, we also have a strong feudal culture and a premium placed on people who know things. Now to change that, to say let us think about what is it that is needed in the classroom, who are the children, where are they coming from, and how we can help them requires a lot of twists, changing of the dynamics in many ways.

The thing that we've done, and I think it has some success is that for any teacher training programs, we will first start out by saying, of course teacher-training programs cascade all the way down, but say whatever level we are doing it, we'll say let's take four days, you need some time to get to know each other, to get to understand what our common goals are and so on.

And in these four days, we will spend much of the time not in the classroom, but in actual schools close by. So we will go out as a group. We will go to a school. We will put aside any outcome measures or any goals that have been set, we

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will start off with a blank sheet and look at where the kids are at and look at what can actually be achieved in a reasonable period of time.

And that has, I think, really helped. So the typical thing that we do is four days. The first day, a group of 50 or 60 will divide up going to schools, let's say 10 schools, and we go into first grade and second grade and it's amazing that we have very similar problems that if you don't learn at the right time, you're never going to learn.

So the first and second grade has to be taken really seriously, maybe kindergarten. In our schools, we often don't have kindergarten as part of the primary-school system. And we will then look at where the kids are at using a very simple assessment tool that everybody can understand on the spot. We often have complicated assessments, which require experts to analyze and give it back to you.

So the assessment tool has to be very simple. We use something like, Can you read letters? Can you read simple words? Can you read simple sentences? And listening to children read gives you a lot of clues as to where they're getting stuck.

As a group, you come back, you present what your school looked like and then the next couple of days, you plan what you'll do with the kids and go back the next day and practice it. So we feel that practice with very simple reasonable goals

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with a whole group of teachers together is the way to move this kind of frontier forward.

LYNN MURPHY: So that sounds like an idea that you really have taken to scale that you've worked in and been working in others. In the last few minutes of this, I wanted to ask, Michelle, you're sitting here listening to all of these, the conditions in India, the conditions in Malawi, and you mentioned how similar the conditions are in D.C.

Both from your experience now there and also in your work with the New Teacher Project, I'm wondering what you can say about what you think are some lessons that you've learned that could be applied globally as we think about what are the models, what are some salient points and how do we scale?

MICHELLE RHEE: I think that what we have to sort of remember is that, and again the similarities are incredible, so I think if you look from the perspective of what do we believe in Washington, D.C., is really going to allow us to change the culture and change the outcomes of kids. It's essentially two sort of fundamental things that I think can be applied more broadly everywhere.

One is the importance of human capital and the fact that you can have wonderful shiny buildings. You can have all the materials you need. You can have great curriculum and programs and initiatives. If you don't have high-quality educators in the classroom every day who take personal

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responsibility for ensuring that every single child in their classroom are learning, then all of this is for naught. And so that is something and the focus on ensuring that you have high-quality educators in every classroom has to be something that is looked at by everyone across the globe.

The second is this piece again about accountability because I think as you in these other countries are looking at new generations of teachers coming in and training these new teachers. What you don't want to do is replicate what we have in this country, which is an absolute culture of entitlement around teaching, where I literally sat in a room with teachers the other day and they were asking me about this new compensation system and in the new compensation system to go on to the tier that I talked about where you're given a significant amount of money if you're producing student achievement levels, you actually have to give up your tenure.

So one of the teachers asked me, she said, Well, so if I go on that track and then I'm not good and I don't do a good job, then what happens to me? I said, Well, I'm not allowed to say *fired*, so you are separated from the system. [Laughter]

And she said, Well, that defeats the purpose, this is a real story, she said that defeats the purpose of why we come in to teaching jobs. She said people who teach are oftentimes people who can't make it out in the corporate world, in the private sector and the reason why you get a job in the public

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sector is so that you're guaranteed a job. She said this in front of a group of people who are all sort of [makes noise], and I said you've got to be kidding me.

I mean this is how people think in this nation about teaching and their jobs and unless we break that mindset and, I mean as I've fired teachers and principals over the last 15 months, people have always e-mailed me and they write me letters and they call me and they say I know this person, I go to church with this person, she's such a great person, she really cares about kids and at some point you have to say I don't care.

If this person is not producing results for kids, if they can't show that they can move kids from point A to point B, we have to take the mindset away from thinking about how do we develop adults and how do we make sure they have all the opportunities and the professional development and the training, all that's fine and well, but at the end of the day, if you are putting the priorities and privileges and rights of adults ahead of what's in the best interest of children, then you end up with a system like ours, which is totally focused on the adults and the actual achievement levels of the children take an absolute backseat.

RUKMINI BANERJI: I wanted to add one more thing that I think helps to energize these adults who've been in our system. We can't get rid of everybody. At least it's harder. Our

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unions are maybe even tougher than yours. We have to think of ways to reignite in teachers or in supervisors or whatever the structure maybe the reason that they became teachers in the first place because the first one of two years, people are very much alive and they have a lot of ideals and then slowly over a period of time it seems to-

MICHELLE RHEE: They get co-opted very quickly.

[Laughter] [Interposing]

RUKMINI BANERJI: But the one thing that we have, at least in India, noticed and universally so, we have a lot of sort of very disgruntled demotivated educational administrators as well. Writing for children really seems to reignite a spark that they have lost. So, for example, if you say that here are the kids who you are going to teach, do you think you can write something for them and can we go back tomorrow and see if they like to read something very simple that you've written.

It's amazing that even the highly demotivated, elderly, disgruntled administrators get quite excited and begin to write. Sometimes it's not the greatest stuff [laughter], but I think it gets the juices flowing. It gets you connected back to these kids because of whom you got into this whole thing in the first place. And I don't know how it would work in the U.S., but do try it. [Laughter]

LYNN MURPHY: On that, there are many questions that are in my mind and I'm sure there are many questions and

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comments that you all have, so I want to thank our panelists for this and I think it is time for you all to talk a little bit about quality education before—

GENE SPERLING: Yes, thank you and you haven't seen the last of them. We're going to give you a chance to put some questions back to them, but I think we're going to just ask very simply from what you work on, inspired by this, really a two-parter. What's most important in the quality and what is the way or the challenges of bringing it to scale? And if you could focus on that, then we'll try to bring some of those ideas up to be presented here, but also to feed some of the questions.

I will say that one of the big issues we had this year was could we combine education in developing countries with the challenges of education for disadvantaged kids in the United States? I don't think this panel could do much better than show that it is worth combining and it brings a certain dynamism to the conversation, so thank you for your first half of your participation. Now it's your chance and we'll come back and hear from them. Thank you. [Applause]

[END RECORDING]

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